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THE RAGTIMER

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1977

PUBLISHED BY
THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

DEDICATED TO THE
PRESERVATION OF
CLASSICAL RAGTIME

SOCIETY REPRINT SHEET MUSIC

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Carnation Rag - Two Step (Clyde Douglass)	SR-162
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"Cleanin' Up" In Georgia (Harry P. Guy)	SR-101
Cloud Kisser Rag (Raymond Birch)	SR-110
Clover Blossom Rag (Fred Heltman)	SR-152

(Listing is continued on page 21 of this issue of THE RAGTIMER)

FOUNDED 1962
INCORPORATED 1970

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
INCORPORATED

is a non - profit corporation having the following objects:

To preserve classical ragtime music and to pursue such other activities as shall serve to maintain and develop interest in classical ragtime music and music related thereto.

RAGTIME NEEDS YOU NOW!
Please answer the "call"
by renewing your
MEMBERSHIP FOR 1978
in THE RAGTIME SOCIETY Inc.
promptly.
Use the attached renewal form.

* * * * *

Keep in mind that the next issue of THE RAGTIMER (Nov. /Dec. 1977) will be the last one mailed out to 1977 members.
YOUR CONTINUING SUPPORT IS NECESSARY

RAGTIME...
UNDER YOUR HAT

We have used the notice box on this page of THE RAGTIMER to publicize the call to ragtimers to renew their membership for 1978. It was decided to hold the fee at $8.00, but we need more members as a means of diffusing the ever-increasing costs of operation. Your past efforts in gaining new members has been effective and helpful. There were those, too, who responded to our financial problems by sending in outright donations over and above the required $8.00 subscription for the current year. As a result, we have been able to keep going. Again we thank you for your support.

The message will be clear to old and new members of the SOCIETY, alike. Resolve to continue your help for 1978 in one or more of these ways:

1. Renew your own membership for 1978 immediately.
2. Encourage others to become members of the SOCIETY.
3. Make membership in THE RAGTIME SOCIETY for 1978 a gift choice, on your Christmas list this year, for someone who should be exposed to the lure of ragtime.

At "press" time we are able to report that preparations for the October annual bash are proceeding smoothly in the direction of another great and friendly "RAGTIME REUNION".

Here is a news item for European members and October overseas tourists: Starting at Amsterdam the week beginning October 24, 1977, the BIX BEIDERBECKE MEMORIAL JAZZ BAND will be doing a series of

(continued on page 4)

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concerts in various cities of the Netherlands as well as some T. V. appearances. TEX WYNDHAM, our record reviewer, is the band pianist. Tex advises that precise information as to playing dates and locations can be obtained from Timothy C. Brown, U. S. Consul, at Amsterdam.

If you happen to visit or live in the New York City area and you're also a fan of WOODY ALLEN, he can be heard every Monday night at Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. The name is the same but the activity changes. MIKE KALINA writes that Woody won't be doing monologues - just playing the clarinet in a ragtime band. Furthermore, Woody hasn't missed a night at Michael's Pub in five years.

Congratulations to member HANK TROY of Denver, Colorado. We hear that he is hosting a popular program of recorded ragtime music over radio station KVOD, 99. 5 FM, on Fridays at 6:30 p. m.

To be a highly respected and talented professional entertainer at age 94 is one thing, but possessing the energy to go with it is something else. EUBIE BLAKE, and his wife MARION, have recently returned to Brooklyn, New York from a summer of concerts in Europe. Now Eubie is off to California where he is scheduled to do another of his many appearances on the JOHNNY CARSON Show for television.

LOU HOOPER, the Canadian senior of ragtime piano, has been appearing regularly on national television with a musical show originating at Halifax, Nova Scotia. We are concerned in learning that Lou has come down with an illness. We wish him back on the "stand" real soon.

Toronto ragtimers were able to catch MAX MORATH on the MIKE DOUGLAS T. V. SHOW on September 13th. The latest folio of collected songs chosen by Max Morath has its cover shown on the back page of this issue of THE RAGTIMER.

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RECORD REVIEW

by
TEX
WYNDHAM

Cadence CR 2001 (2-Lp set): 'Dick Hyman Plays Keyboard Classics Of The Nostalgia Years', piano solos

Selections: Kitten On The Keys, Dizzy Fingers, In A Mist, Soliloquy, Sapphire, Nola, Dancing Tambourine, Doll Dance, Serenade For A Wealthy Widow, Flapperette, Gershwin's Prelude No. 2, Nocturne From 'Two American Sketches', Three Little Oddities, Candlelights, Tranquility, Canadian Capers, Rialto Ripples, Ragging The

Scale, Dictys On 7th Avenue, Down Home Rag.

Available at $5.98 (U. S. and Canadian residents) from Cadence Records Inc., 119 West 57th Street, New York, New York 10019.

Ragtimers will delight in hearing the half-dozen or so numbers on this well-recorded, brilliantly executed album that qualify as rags (and good ones, too) by any standard, although you have to be somewhat disappointed that these tracks, by inexplicably omitting repeats, are the only ones where the published score is not literally followed. Hard-core ragophiles will be ecstatic over the rest of the lineup - a generous sampling of popular piano solos of the twenties, the fame of which has transcended the fact that they are almost never recorded. While these numbers are not rags, they stood cheek-by-jowl with ragtime's last discernable development in the classic period, the "novelty" style, and though they may be slow and moody, or lacking any expressed left-hand rhythm, their debt to ragtime's innovations is readily apparent.

Much of their neglect is doubtlessly traceable to their difficulty, calling for a technician of Hyman's ability to weave, as he does, through their labyrinthine eccentricities with the proper sense of comfort and buoyance. Perhaps the touch of delicacy in even the faster ones - "Nola", "Doll Dance", "Flapperette", all tremendously popular and still not hard to locate in music stores - has also contributed to their being overlooked by traditionally-oriented pianists in favor of stuff that contains a stronger trace of the bordello.

Still, the conceptions of Zez Confrey ("Kitten", "Fingers", "Oddities"), Rube Bloom ("Soliloquy", "Sapphire"), and the others are rich and inventive in using the keyboard's resources to develop a mood, to illustrate a title, or to draw a melody from a juxtaposition of seemingly unmelodic licks. Hyman has grasped these conceptions in depth and does them full justice while rendering a listenable, enjoyable program and filling a void in the catalogue of vintage piano works. A bull's-eye.

* * *

Zeno HZ-99 'The Queen City Ragtime Ensemble'

Selections: Weeping Willow, Heliotrope Bouquet, Polyragmic, Cottontail Rag (unaccompanied piano), St. Louis Rag, Original Rags, Rosebud March, Bethena Waltzes, Ragtime Dance.

Personnel: Ray Leake, piano; Maurie Walker, banjo; Bill Clark, tuba; Jack Cook, drums.

Available from Happy Hairy Zeno Productions, P. O. Box 1273, Littleton, Colorado 80120.

Mostly these are accompanied piano solos, tuba doubling the left-hand line and snare drum accenting the lead, although Walker's deft banjo takes over to add a bucolic country-dance flavor to Joplin's "Dance" (extended version) and both Walker and Cook get some melody in the rousing, foot-tapping 6/8 "Rosebud". "Polyragmic" is exceptionally good, the additional emphasis available from different instruments effectively enhancing the piece's intricacies, but "Willow" and "Heliotrope" seem rather mechanical and colorless, despite the added punch you might expect from a full rhythm team (on this disc, the "back line" of Denver's Queen City (traditional) Jazz Band). Leake is a clean and accurate pianist with an approach that, though somewhat formal,

is sympathetic to the material; his solo interpretation of "Cottontail", reflective yet pulsating, is most satisfying. As for the others, "Original" and "St. Louis" are of about average interest with the brisk Viennese-tempoed "Bethena" perhaps better if you're not, as I am, beginning to get a little tired of hearing yet another version of this long, rather pretentious, relatively-easy-to-play waltz. C-plus.

* * *

Euphonic ESR-1210 'New Orleans Ragtime', piano solos by Burt Bales

Selections: Fat Frances, Kansas City Stomps, The Pearls, New Orleans Joys, Original Rags, Mister Joe (two takes), Kansas City Man Blues, Sweet Savannah Sue, Maple Leaf Rag, Chimes Blues, Grandpa's Spells, King Porter Stomp, Wild Man Blues.

Available at $6.95 (add 50¢ outside U.S.) postpaid from Euphonic Sound Recording Co., 357 Leighton Drive, P. O. Box 476, Ventura, California 93001.

Any pianist who has been, as Bales has, deeply involved for many years with the original West Coast jazz revivalists (Watters, Murphy, Scobey), whose efforts crystallized the resurrection of interest in traditional jazz and ragtime, probably deserves to be better represented on record than Bales is. This Lp addresses that situation in a left-handed way, as it is a tape of an in-person session where Bales was obviously providing straight-ahead, honky-tonk-type background for a small but audible audience which doesn't seem to be paying much attention and perhaps thereby causes his lack of inspiration. The music is propulsive, mounted on a driving left hand, very Mortonesque in voicing (as the titles would suggest), tempered with some East Coast stride figures, well executed but (except for the imaginatively-developed "Kansas City Man", the hard-hitting "Maple Leaf" and the rolling second version of "Joe") generally superficial. Add the prominent foot-tapping and so-so sound quality and you've got a rather weak entry here.

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EWELL'S TRULY - A FINE PIANIST

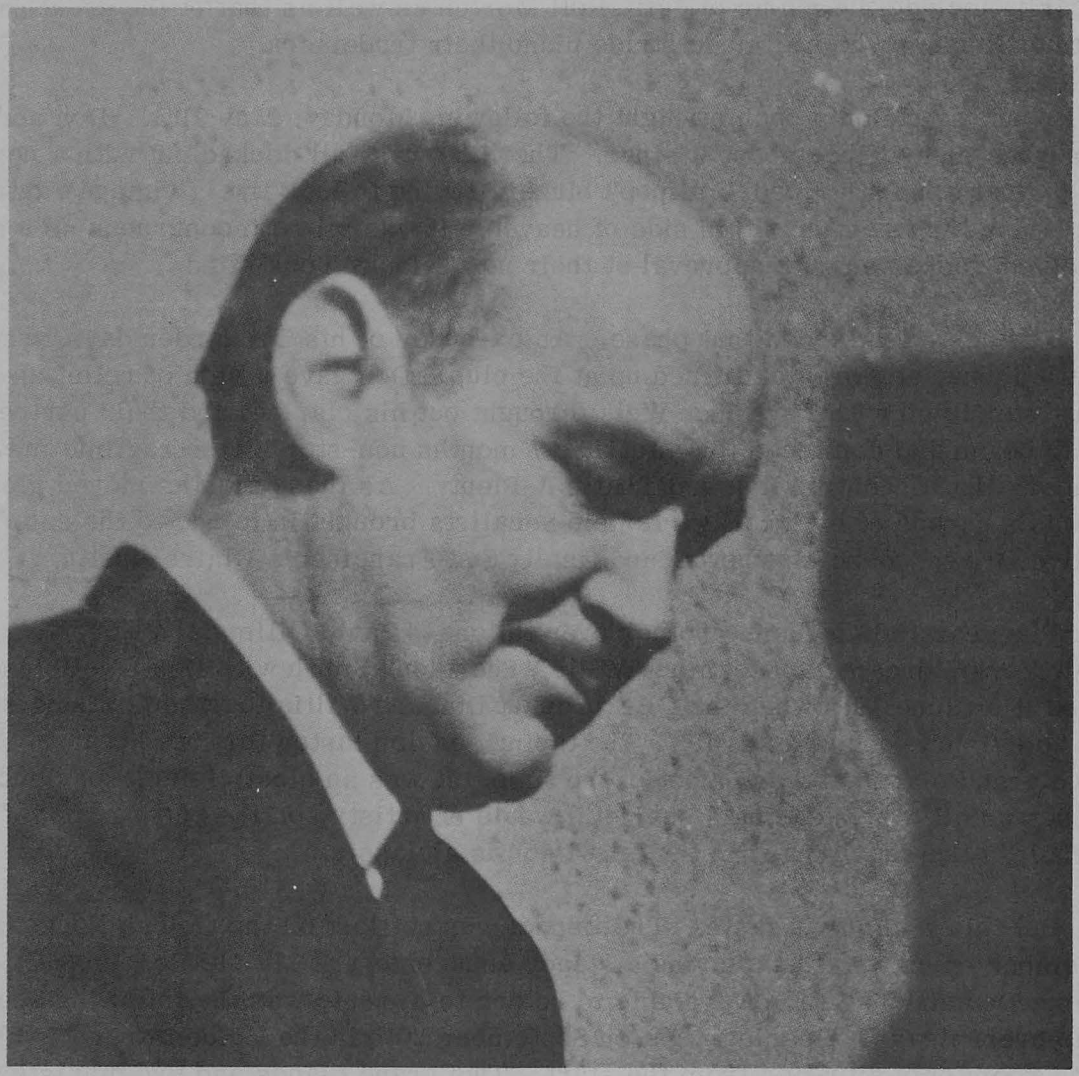
- A LIVING GIANT OF THE KEYBOARD

By Jack Cuff

Virtuoso pianist DON EWELL is the man this story is all about - the man who in 1956 was chosen by the late Jack Teagarden as the band pianist and arranger to take over from his sister Norma Teagarden when she retired. Perhaps not as widely known is the fact that Don was the man the late Louis Armstrong wanted as his pianist in the late '60's while on his final tours and manager Joe Glaser couldn't persuade to come along.

It was fate which brought Don Ewell to Toronto in 1965 and for me the beginning of a warm and lasting friendship. Strangely for Don, it was a fateful tryst with lovers of Ragtime that started it all.

Ragtime Bob Darch had been engaged for the grand opening of the Golden Nugget Tavern at Toronto on February 15, 1965. The management wished to establish Ragtime as its musical policy. By the time May rolled around Bob felt impelled to move on to other neglected bookings along the ragtime "circuit". The club management relied on Bob to find a temporary replacement in the hope that he would return. Bob had become acquainted with Don at Fort Lauderdale previously. With difficulty he persuaded Don to accept the gig, at least on a temporary basis. Closing night for Bob Darch came Saturday night May 8, 1965 with Don present to "case" his new surroundings.



DON EWELL

On that evening the magic began for all that was to follow in the next several years. About the second last set, Bob began by introducing Don Ewell to the audience and bringing him on stage to the second piano. Everything broke loose as the two pianists blazed out numbers like That Teasin' Rag, Shine, Grace and Beauty Rag, Indiana, Temptation Rag, Darktown Strutters Ball, M. L. R., and Bunch O' Blackberries. Bob then left Don to do some solos. The Ewell choice was a Waller medley made up of Squeeze Me, Ain't Misbehavin', Honeysuckle Rose, and finally Don's famous treatment of Handful of Keys. Well the set ended right there with Bob's remembered remark:

"Following that is like following an atomic bomb."

When the evening ended, Jean and I and our friends held a farewell party for Bob at our home, and the uncertain Don Ewell came as well. It was not long before I discovered that Don was full of qualms and doubts about his new gig. Sure he knew a number of rags - but night after night? Those who know Don will know that he is not a singer and prefers to do all his talking with his fingers. It took very little effort before I had Don cheered up a little with the news that a ragtime policy must necessarily include the music of Jelly Roll Morton as well as that of the great ragtime pianists of Harlem who had made stride piano their trademark.

Then came Don's opening night the following Monday, May 10th. Don and I have laughed many times about it since. There he was, all decked out with a new straw "boater" and a striped "lollipop" blazer, trying to look like a vintage ragtimer while playing the finest jazz this side of heaven. It was all so incongruous as a smiling management looked on with approval at their new "Honky Tonk" find.

The next night ended that phase. An ex-buddy of his Teagarden days, who had settled down at Toronto, turned up at the club. Don gave a sigh of relief as Henry Cuesta (later to go with Lawrence Welk) brought out his clarinet and their partnership in music began and continued for a further 7 months non-stop as the ragtime moved to numbers like Eccentric Rag and That's A Plenty. As these months moved along there was a parade of high calibre female vocalists brought in to add to the entertainment like Olive Brown, Babe Matthews, and finally San Francisco's Claire Austin.

The year 1966 became another eventful one. David Gillman, a Toronto promoter (ex-New York), dreamed of teaming Willie "The Lion" Smith with Don Ewell, and he managed it on June 19th when the CBC brought Don and Willie together in their studio 4 for the television show "Festival". The taping session lasted for more than two hours with two grand pianos at work most of the time. It was an electrifying experience. The best was all of it, leaving a shameful waste of artistry on the cutting room floor. Nevertheless the surviving film for television is a classic.

But this was only a taste. The impact was not lost on the Golden Nugget management. Don was then playing a steady engagement at Myrtle Beach, S. C. The first time Don and The Lion were able to return to Toronto was the following September. What an event it was! Opening night on September 26th in the Golden Nugget was a standing room only situation from the start. Two grand pianos and two pianists with their newly discovered and amazing affinity for each other began to play. As Willie put it the "vibrations" were perfect - "a mutual joining of our minds, bodies and spirit". For openers the tunes were symbolic, I Found A New Baby, and Just You, Just Me. Henry Cuesta on clarinet was an added artist who joined in with Beale St. Blues and a romping Dr. Jazz. I don't think I spent as much time in a night club before or since as I did during the next 4 weeks.

Don finished 1966 with other playing dates. He joined the Dukes of Dixieland at Las Vegas, Nev. and on December 14th did a concert at Denver for the Denver Jazz Club with singer Barbara Dane and bassist Charles Burrell of the Denver Symphony Orchestra.

The rave reviews in the newspapers at Toronto could not be ignored. Don and Henry Cuesta returned to the Nugget at the beginning of January, 1967 and stayed together for a 2 month engagement.

They were joined by singer Olive Brown and on February 13th the Lion arrived. On February 20th Toronto's severest Jazz Critic, Patrick Scott, lured Don and Willie into a recording studio. Out of it came the classic 2 piano album of the decade titled GRAND PIANO. Also, the Colonial Tavern management signed Don up for an engagement as the "Don Ewell Quartet" to follow later.

Don planned to introduce Edmond Hall as clarinetist for this engagement. Then the shocking news came of Ed Hall's unexpected death. A comforting solution came with the willing acceptance of Ed's brother Herb Hall to act as a replacement. On May 1st Don and his Quartet opened at the Colonial Tavern with Herb Hall, clarinet; Jim McHarg, bassist; and George Reed, drums; for a one month engagement and again there were rave reviews. The Colonial management had further designs on Don's future. They wanted to get Willie "The Lion" Smith back with Don as soon as it could be arranged in their scheduling of entertainment.

This was also around the time when Don was being pressed by Joe Glaser to join Louis Armstrong's touring show band. I remember the difficult problem Don was having about making a decision as we privately talked over the pro and con. In the past, whenever Louis and Jack Teagarden met in the same city, Louis would often sit in as a welcome guest. Like any other musician, Don had warm affection for Louis, respected him, and as mentioned they had played together. It was hard for Don to refuse, but mainly he was not ready to take to the road and return to the hardships of suitcase living and of the travelling one night stands.

So it was that Don and The Lion opened at the Colonial Tavern on December 11th, 1967. Both pianists had come from New York City where they had been playing together at the Village Gate in Greenwich for some weeks. Don had spent his final evening visiting with Eubie and Marion Blake at their home in Brooklyn. (The Blakes told me, when I met them again a few months later, that they had been concerned about Don at that time and did not think he was well.) From the opening moment at the Colonial Tavern it became apparent that something was amiss. Don was in difficulty. By the next day it looked like Don had suffered a mild stroke and he was hospitalized. Don managed to get home for Christmas and he was fortunate enough to overcome the crippling effect.

A great tribute was paid to Don by his fellow musicians and friends. A special benefit performance was held at the Colonial on Sunday evening December 11th. It was a moving occasion. Band leader pianist Claude Hopkins had answered the call to complete Don's engagement with The Lion. Claude and The Lion performed, as did Henry Cuesta and his group, Jim McHarg and the Metro Stompers, Eddie Barefield on clarinet and sax, singers Olive Brown and Jodie Drake and others. The occasion was not for a pleasant reason but the event was a unique and special musical treat.

By February 12th, 1968 Don was well enough again to return to the Golden Nugget with Henry Cuesta. The press critics greeted his return with the headlines "Ewell bounces back from stroke" and "A recovered Ewell is therapy for his fans".

As the weeks went by and Henry Cuesta had to forsake Don for other commitments, the Nugget held Don over as their special pianist with a succession of guest artists like drummer Jo Jones, saxaphonist Bud Freeman, guitarist veteran Lonnie Johnson (to quote Lonnie about Don: "I close my eyes and I'm back with Fats"), singer Trump Davidson and others.

On July 27th Eubie Blake and Marion came to The Ragtime Society Annual Bash at Toronto. Don was still playing at the Nugget and his guest there was Earle Warren on alto sax, a former member of the Count Basie Band. Eubie and Marion were still concerned about Don and because they wanted to see for themselves that he had fully recovered, we took a brief recess in the evening from the ragtime proceedings to drive over to the Nugget. It was a happy reunion as Eubie sat down at the piano to play his own "Memories Of You" for Don, while an awe-struck audience listened in on a special bonus.

Though Don still returns to Toronto from time to time, his long general stay from 1965 to 1968, regretfully for his many fans, came to an end that summer.

At 60 years of age Don looks back on a lifetime spent with the sounds of music. Born Donald Tynan Ewell at Baltimore, Maryland on November 14, 1916, he was the second son in a minister's family. A younger sister came along a few years later. It was probably church music that first caught Don's attentive ears as his parents moved from church to church in the conference. This placed several of his school years in Laurel, Delaware and later Baltimore. With a wry face, Don likes to say that his first recollection of playing was on the linoleum. When he was about 8 years of age, Don was happily sitting in with his 5 year's older brother when the older groups of boy musicians jammed in practice sessions. There was Don with his slide whistle, ocarina and toy saxaphone doing his best. His brother played violin and trombone and he was good on both. Don's brother later under the name "Ed Lynch" became trombonist with Glen Gray's Casa Loma Band.

At 10 years of age, Don began his formal classical training on the piano. He was quickly into Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin and Mozart. His love of Beethoven and Mozart in particular has never left him.

At high school in Laurel he played the piccolo in the school band. In 1934 he entered Peabody Conservatory of Music at Baltimore with a one year scholarship and majored in advanced harmony and composition. He also held a four year scholarship at Maryland Institute of Fine Arts which he dropped. He then took, as well, a business secretarial course. But a total commitment to music and jazz in particular was being made despite the doubts and uncertainties swirling around in Don's mind.

He now leaned to the piano as his favoured instrument and by 1936 was playing regularly with local combos. Then he joined the trio of trumpeter Sidney DeParis at Atlantic City for an engagement. Soon he was arranging music for local groups as well.

It was during these years that he was absorbing the work of pianists like James P. Johnson, Fats Waller, Joe Sullivan, Jess Stacy, and later Jelly Roll Morton. Listening to recordings, and catching them in person whenever he could, was beginning

to have a shaping effect. To this day you can still hear traces of that amalgam in the extraordinary piano style which is characteristically Don Ewell. It is ever elusive. There is James P. in the striding left hand, at times a Yancey trace, a Waller in the descending breaks, a Eubie Blake in the accented notes, and the solid piano of a Stacy and Sullivan, and overlaid is the plaintive and primitive sound of a Jelly Roll Morton. All of these influences come through. Months of duo piano work with Willie "The Lion" Smith at Toronto has left its mark as well. But in total effect, the resultant style is sheer joy to the listener's ear. When Don plays the piano, you hear the piano in all its dimensions. One can easily understand the statement made of Ewell, "He can do everything on a piano except play bad."

By the end of the '30's Don was ready. But in 1941 he was drafted into the army a few weeks before that fateful day of December 7th when the Pearl Harbour debacle brought the U. S. into World War II. Inducted at Harrisburg, Don was sent to Fort Knox to join an armoured unit. Then came the opportunity to join the Glen Miller organization and an Air Force Corps. special services transfer was arranged. Don played flute in the concert band, Glockenspiel in the marching band, and piano in the air force dance band. For most of the war period Don was counting the days. Except for his records and an occasional chance to sit in when on leave, he was denied his love for real jazz. But there was the time at Chicago when he sat in with Red Allen and accompanied singer Billie Holiday. Nevertheless, they were frustrating years. Don put it to me a different way. "I began in the army September 13th, 1941, and it ended 4 years, 2 months, 27 days and 11 hours later." Late in 1945 Don was on his way once more, still in uniform heading for the Stuyvesant Casino in the lower east side of New York City (2nd Avenue and 4th Street) fascinated by the prospect of hearing the Crescent City jazz of Bunk Johnson. Through the efforts of a mutual friend he met Bunk, was invited to sit-in for a set, and was hired on the spot for the upcoming 1946 engagement of Bunk's band at the Stuyvesant. He was the only white musician Bunk ever used regularly in his band.

In January of 1946 Don was part of a trio with Albert Nicholas on clarinet and Baby Dodds on drums. The years went by swiftly, and the more Don improved, the more he abused his health. So there were times when he was forced to rest. But through all the years Don was a featured pianist with the elite of the jazz traditionalists as the following will indicate:

New York	1946	with Willie (Bunk) Johnson
Chicago	1947	with Doc Evans
	1948	with Sidney Becket
	1949	with Muggsy Spanier
	1949/50	with Miff Mole
	1951	with George Brunies
	1952	with Eddie Wiggins
	1953	with Lee Collins
San Francisco	1953/56	with Edward (Kid) Ory
		with Bob Scobey
		with Melvin (Turk) Murphy
		soloist at Hangover Club

		with George Lewis at the Tin Angel
		with singers Lizzie Miles and Johnny Mathis
On Tour	1956/64	with Jack Teagarden, including a U. S. State Dept. sponsored Asian Tour (1958/59).

It was while Don was pianist in the Teagarden band that he and his wife Mary moved from California and settled down at Pompano Beach just north of Fort Lauderdale in Florida. They were followed immediately by Jack and Addy Teagarden who also moved to Pompano. Then came the untimely death of Jack Teagarden at New Orleans in January of 1964 ending a treasured association of 7 years between Don and Jack. A disconsolate Ewell had to turn to less comfortable situations. For a while he was with Phil Napoleon. Then he formed his own group "Don Ewell's Backroom Boys" and in 1964/65 he was playing in the Bonanza Room at the Escape Hotel in Fort Lauderdale, alternating sets with ragtime promoter Bob Darch. It was this gig which led to the beginning of the "Toronto" period in Don's career, and it lasted with brief interruptions for a period of more than 3 years.

When the "Toronto" era ended for Don he began what can be called the "New Orleans" era. From late 1968 until the spring of 1972 he made his home next door to Preservation Hall on St. Peters St. in the French Quarter. During that span of years he was the regular pianist with The Dukes of Dixieland. Don felt at home in New Orleans. He had spent the winters of 1946 and part of 1947 in that city, playing with local musicians and soaking up the sounds, sights, tastes and customs of living in this colourful milieu. Since 1972 Don has been able to work out of his beloved Pompano base. Much of the time has been spent at Fort Lauderdale. For a long time he was with Andy Bartha and the Deep South Dixielanders and other groups.

Along the way and now currently Don is frequently involved in guest and concert work, recording dates, and foreign tours. Examples would be:

1971	European tour where he made 4 L. P. records and performed in England, Ireland, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, with the windup at Paris, France.
1971	Concert at Seneca College Theatre, Toronto on May 30th "Don Ewell and Friends" with Herb Hall, Harold Holmes and Don Vickery - (Again the rave review comment "Ewell doesn't dab at the keyboard, he makes it work over the whole range.)
1972	The summer with his Tchoupitoulas Street Six at Blues Alley, Washington, D. C.
1972	Three months (September 8 to December 9) at Cav-A-Bob Tavern, Toronto with his Quartet, including Herb Hall. It was during this visit that Don took part at The Ragtime Society annual gathering along with Eubie Blake and other prominent entertainers.

He has since been on tour to Australia (1975). Last October (1976) Don joined the Climax Jazz Band for a week at Toronto as guest artist. In the area of recordings Don will be found on some 40 to 50 discs as soloist, and with singers, combos and bands. There are many others on the shelf which have yet to be released. But at least we have the Teagarden tracks, and dates with a host of prominent musicians associated with traditional jazz. Names not already mentioned include Darnell Howard, Minor "Ram"

Hall, Jim Robinson, Kid Thomas Valentine, Cie Frazier, Nappy Trottier, Bill Napier, Pops Foster, Ed Garland, Alvin Alcorn, Marty Grosz, Slow Drag Pavageau Alcide, Bob Greene, Bobby Hackett, and Pee Wee Russell.

Occasionally, too, you get to hear Don's own compositions like South Side Strut, Spanish Singe, Delmar Drag and Melancholy Blues.

In his chosen art, Don is a perfectionist, and yet so highly developed in a creative direction that playing with the best of highly trained musicians does not appear to be more satisfying to him than joining in with the old-time, ear-trained and primitive jazz musicians who create from their heart and feelings as they go along. Becoming acquainted with Ewell is not an easy task. He seems aloof, given to moods and introspection and with all that an added touch of shyness. Yet Don is a warm and humourous person (If you listen closely you will hear a lot of quickies). For all the complexities in his personality he is loyal to his friends (and Camel cigarettes I must say). Apart from his music Don is interested in the world around him, is concerned about social injustice in the world, is an avid reader, is somewhat into photography and is a skilled chess player. (I tested his reputation on one occasion - he won with eight moves, ending all doubt. I might add that I found myself on slightly better terms when it came to stud poker.)

Perhaps the most important influence on his life has been his charming wife Mary. During Don's long stay in Toronto we had the opportunity to become acquainted with Mary and to witness the sparkle that Don would take on whenever she was able to stay over for a few weeks. With beaming smiles Don has told me the story of their first meeting. It seems that Mary was travelling from San Francisco, through Chicago back in 1949 when Don was playing at the Bee Hive with Miff Mole. Mary had discovered Don on records and wanted so much to meet and hear him play personally. Up to that point Mary anticipated that Don was black (understandably so with Don's special feeling for jazz). It was Don's day off so he was catching up with a little libation in the Bee Hive Annex Bar. As Don puts it, "This beautiful young woman came up beside me at the bar and asked the bartender where she might find Don Ewell." Don turned to Mary in his bewildered surprise and said, "I'm Don Ewell". Well that's when the coloured lights came on to stay.

That evening Don took Mary out on their first date to his favourite Chicago "Haunt", at 11 West 35th Street at State. It was the flat where Jimmy and Mama Yancey lived. Most nights it was "the place to go" for those in the know. With some Old Crow or Seagrams to pave the way, there was usually a parade of pianists like Jimmy Yancey himself, Albert Ammons, Cripple Clarence Lofton, Meade Lux Lewis and sometimes the white boy Don Ewell. The romance continued between Don and Mary and a few months later they were married.

Some time ago we spent part of our vacation at Pompano Beach visiting with Mary and Don Ewell. Mary gives Don the strength and encouragement he needs as they ponder on an even greater future for the man I have called "A LIVING GIANT OF THE KEYBOARD." As Willie "The Lion" Smith would say, if he were still with us, "The stars and planets of the universe direct us in our destiny."

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THE REBIRTH OF RAGTIME

... AND THIS TIME IT'S HERE TO STAY

(Ed. Comment: South Central Ontario has its own "Entertainer" magazine which is published each month from its address at 940 Main St. West, Hamilton, Ontario L8S 1B1. The following article appeared in the August, 1977 issue and was written by RICHARD GALE who regularly hosts a radio musical show which originates at Hamilton.)

"Quickly now! What musical trait do Igor Stravinsky, Claude Debussy and Johannes Brahms have in common? Ragtime, that's what. No kidding. Stravinsky wrote a piece called "Piano Rag Music"; Debussy composed two rag-inspired pieces: "General Lavine" and "Golliwogg's Cakewalk"; and Brahms, just before his death, was giving consideration to a ragtime project.

But despite such potent advocacy, and despite its gentle innocence and infectious gaiety, ragtime, until its recent revival, was never quite, well, 'decent'. And no wonder. Its origins are to be found in the black brothels, gaming houses and saloons of the American midwest around the middle of the nineteenth century. The musical establishment of the day, what with its European fixation and, at best, uncertain racial attitudes, wasn't about to take to its bosom a form evolved from the efforts of itinerant "ticklers" or "professors".

But somehow, stealthily and almost in spite of itself, it acquired a distinctive form, a significant content, and a gradually widening public. Pianist Eubie Blake, about 94 years old at this writing, once pointed out: "People ask me where did ragtime come from and I say I don't know, I heard it all my life."

The same could probably be said for Scott Joplin, ragtime's leading ex(and pro) ponent, born in Texarkana, Texas in 1868, the son of a fiddle-playing ex-slave. Joplin was picking out tunes on a battered old square piano by the time he was seven, and had picked up at least the basics of harmony a few years later, courtesy of the local inevitable German music teacher. Much of his teens and twenties were spent playing piano in the honky-tonk and red-light districts of scores of towns through Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana and Kansas. By 1896 he had settled in Sedalia, Missouri and was into serious study of composition and harmony.

Death Due to Ragtime Opera

Following the publication of his first big hit, the million-selling "Maple Leaf Rag" in 1899, Joplin settled down to produce a steady stream of ragtime pieces like "Solace", "The Entertainer", and many more during the course of a turbulent decade that took him through an unhappy marriage, much travelling, and ever-widening creative plans. His last years were spent in New York, domestically tranquil in a second marriage, but concentrating on "Treemonisha", an ambitious three-act ragtime opera which increasingly became an obsession, leading ultimately to emotional instability, hospitalization, and, on April 1, 1917, death.

The United States entered World War I the same day, and by the time the smoke had cleared from that colossal bit of nastiness the jazz era had arrived on the musical scene to add syncopation (a rag's essential quality) to its attractions. Pure

ragtime was eclipsed, done in by the times, by a lack of appreciation for its simple virtues, and by commercialized Tin Pan Alley imitations.

In its heyday, though, the music of Joplin and several talented contemporaries flourished mightily - and not only in the hands of pianists. Arrangements blossomed for mandolin (indeed for massed mandolins), for guitar, for violin, for dance orchestras, for bands of infinitely varied sonic hues and lord knows what else.

And then came the doldrums. With the occasional exception of such deathless renderings as the Guy Lombardo version of the "Maple Leaf Rag" and the persistent ministrations of a dedicated few, ragtime lay fallow from shortly after Joplin's death until the beginnings of the current revival in the late 1950s. Then, through the '60s, and particularly into the '70s, the movement took off, assuming steamroller proportions, helped in no small measure by the movie The Sting with its Marvin Hamlisch-arranged Joplin score.

Contemporary Ragtime Composers

Festivals cropped up devoted to the music of Joplin and others of similar ilk. Rag punctuated the best-selling album lists. Everybody from cocktail pianists to symphony orchestra conductors got into the act.

A couple of years ago, Joplin's "Treemonisha" was produced in New York ... to tremendous acclaim ... and hauled down a Pulitzer Prize. A movie, based on Joplin's life and of course using his music, has been made. And ragtime does not seem to be going the way of most nostalgia fads. It's really here to stay this time!

Ben McPeek, the Toronto arranger, conductor and composer of everything from commercial jingles to concert pieces, is a rabid ragtimer, as is pianist John Arpin of Toronto. The Canadian Brass include rags in their repertoire. Max Morath regularly tours his one-man ragtime show, and in fact surfaced briefly in Hamilton Place a few months ago.

Locally, Dundas lawyer David Lee not only plays rags, he writes the things. Not content with that, he publishes them. And not content with that either, he commercially records them. Better still, his pieces show real creative talent.

But the ultimate proof of the durability of ragtime this time around is the continuing popularity of a tradition started by the practitioners of the art in the American midwest a century ago. In that era, the "ticklers" and "professors" were wont to gather in the back rooms of cafes, saloons, brothels and other emporia, there to regale each other with their music and to exchange ideas on into the wee small hours. These days the venues differ, but the spirit (or at least the musical spirit) is much the same."

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KOWLOON

THE SPEAKEASY: 3C Granville Circuit, Kowloon. Tel: K-681897. Just behind the Park Hotel. An English pub with a Roaring Twenties atmosphere. Good time music and live entertainment featured from 8:30 p. m. every night except Monday by "Crazy" Laurence Marriott, at the piano and organ with his own brand of jazz, ragtime, boogie-woogie.

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POPULAR MUSIC

(Ed. Comment: The NATIONAL SHEET MUSIC SOCIETY, INC. in its June, 1977 newsletter drew attention to the historical importance of popular music as an accurate reflection of the concurrent life and times affecting human behaviour. Classic Ragtime Titles and the words of many rag songs shared in the establishment of this social record. The following is taken from Musigram, Vol. I, No. II, February 1964:)

"There is a story told that in some strange land and time the people were about to sound a bell for a vast midnight tower. It should toll for dead monarchs, "The King is dead," and make glad clamor for the new-born prince, "Long live the king." Now, this bell was not to be dug out of the cold mountain; it was to be made of something that had been warmed by human touch and loved by human love, and so the people came like pilgrims to a shrine, and cast their offerings into a furnace and went away.

There were links of chains that bondmen had worn, and fragments of swords that had been broken in heroes' hands. There were crosses, and bracelets, and rings of fine gold, and trinkets of silver and toys of poor red copper. They even brought things that were licked up in an instant by the red tongues of flame; good words they uttered, flowers they had cherished, perishable things all, that never could be heard, perchance, in the rich tone and volume of the bell.

But by and by the bell woke in its chamber, and its great waves of music rolled gloriously out over all the land like an anthem, and every tone in it was like a household word to somebody. Everyone that had given the least thing to the making of that bell recognized some tone and knew it with a solemn joy.

Poured into one fiery heat together the humblest gifts were blent into one great wealth, and its music burst forth eloquent and strong, and the people's heart and consciousness and national soul moved and heaved on the wave of its mighty voice.

Perhaps the "secret" of popular music lies within the fabric of that story, for the material out of which it is fashioned is conditioned by what we as a people contribute to the melting pot of contemporary life through our collective attitudes, likes, dislikes, customs, morals, etc. These form the substance out of which the song-writer patterns his music, and as the music sounds forth each of us hears the echo of that which we have contributed. Popular music is therefore a reflection of life and times and truly an historical record. Should all traces of our civilization be destroyed with the single exception of our printed music sheets, an archeologist of some future day could reconstruct from them a most accurate picture of the kind of people we were, the way we looked and dressed, our wars, politics and social movements, moral attitudes, how we regarded God and womanhood, the natural disasters we had suffered - practically every phase of our living.

We have written into our popular songs descriptions of how we made a livelihood, about the lumber camps and loggers, the railroads, the mines, the cowboys, the sea, the river boats, the Erie Canal and the hoboes and the gypsy. We have extolled our wartime victories and glorified our political figures and have sung about our sports and the ways in which we found relaxation.

Popular music always has had and always will have its place in the lives of the people. It is music that requires no special musical training or serious mental effort to be enjoyed. It is down to earth, without apology or pretension of greatness, honestly reflecting life as it is lived and doing what music is supposed to do - give pleasure. It is music of the people, by the people and for the people."

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LETTERS

Letters are welcome from members. Excerpts believed to be of general interest are passed along in this section of THE RAGTIMER.

I have recently learned that starting January 1, 1978 the hourly fee, to have the U. S. Copyright Office make a search of its records and render a written report on the copyright status of works, is going up from the present $5. 00 to $10. 00 per hour. For verification of this, one can write to the Copyright Office for a copy of circular R22, "How To Investigate The Copyright Status Of A Work" (For use in 1977).

Perhaps this information is of use to other members of THE RAGTIME SOCIETY in the event they wish to have a copyright search made on musical or other works.

- Solomon Goodman
Long Island City, N. Y., U. S. A.

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Thinking of the upcoming October bash I was reminded that our local newspaper has been and is telling us that anyone going into Canada this year must show proof of car insurance if driving, which can be obtained from their insurance company. They must also show their birth certificate or voter registration card. I just felt I'd write so this fact might be printed in our Ragtimer.

- H. J. Angel, Portage, Mich., U. S. A.

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WE HOPE TO ENJOY YOUR PRESENCE
AT SOCIETY'S ANNUAL BASH ON
THE WEEKEND OF OCTOBER 15th, 1977

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CAPSULE

INFORMATION

RELEASES ---------- FOR HAPPY HUNTING

NOTE: We often receive information from members and other sources which can be passed along in brief form as items of possible general interest. CAPSULE INFORMATION RELEASES do not refer to items or material which can be obtained from the SOCIETY. Further, we do not guarantee the accuracy of the information given. Under the conditions stated, we are able to publicize a broader coverage of promising information coming to our attention.

Book - THIS IS RAGTIME by Terry Waldo with foreword by Eubie Blake. Covers ragtime from its roots to the 1970s. Salty reading but thoroughly enjoyable in hands of Terry Waldo. 256 pages, 48 photos, 8 line drawings, U. S. price $10. 95, Hawthorn Books, Inc., 260 Madison Ave., New York City, New York 10016.

Organization - NATIONAL SHEET MUSIC SOCIETY, Inc., Box 2235, Pasadena, California 91105, U. S. A. Publishes a newsletter each month (except July and August), also a directory listing members' sheet music interests. Membership fee is $5. 00 per calendar year ($10. 00 outside the U. S. A.). Members include collectors as well as authors and composers of sheet music.

Organization - THE MAPLE LEAF CLUB, 5560 West 62nd Street, Los Angeles, California 90056, U. S. A. Publishes RAG TIMES, 6 issues per year. DICK ZIMMERMAN is the editor. Club has same objectives as THE RAGTIME SOCIETY. Membership in The Maple Leaf Club is $4. 00 per year for the U. S. A. and Canada ($6. 00 elsewhere).

Ragtime Pianists - HENNING ANDERSON JAZZ MUSIC CO., DENMARK (Telephone 01 -605362) is interested in hearing from talented ragtimers in Europe in connection with his current talent search.

Book - REMINISCING WITH SISSLE AND BLAKE by Robert Kimball & Wiliam Bulcom - (Cloth bound, 256 pages) a pictorial history and story of the famous team of songwriters, musicians, and vaudeville troupers. Originally published price $12. 95. Available, though otherwise out of print, at a special remainders offer of $9. 95 postpaid (U. S. funds) from Eubie Blake Music, 284-A Stuyvesant Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11221, U. S. A.

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PERFORMERS: Please keep us posted on your whereabouts and your schedule will appear in this column.

SOMETHING DOING...

JOHN ARPIN - at the Chelsea Inn, 33 Gerrard St. W., Toronto - in "The Piano Bar" Mon. to Fri. 5:00 p. m. to 8:00 p. m. and with his trio in "The Chelsea Bun" Lounge Mon. to Sat. 9:00 p. m. to 1:00 a. m.

EUBIE BLAKE - The DEAN of RAGTIME - This popular recording artist and composer performs frequently at Concerts and Festivals. Does guest appearances on T. V. talk shows and is often to be heard on radio programs (watch your local press music programs for dates).

STEEN CHRISTENSEN - at the Mechanical Music Museum (MMM), Vesterbrogade 150, Copenhagen (Denmark), every 2nd & 4th Wednesday each month.

PETER FAHRENHOLTZ - plays solo ragtime piano and with bands - regularly on tour in Denmark. Occasionally on tours in other European countries.

DAVE FLOWITT - at Brunswick Hotel, Brunswick Street, Toronto with Dr. McJazz Band, Thursday through Saturday, 9:00 p. m. to 1:00 a. m.

"GASLIGHT" GALE FOEHNER - now in Chicago, Ill., Thurs. at Four Farthings Pub, Lincoln/ Cleveland Sts., Sat. at The Butterfly Rest., 1407 N. Wells St.

ROBERT GOODNOW - at Ramada Inn, Casper, Wyoming, October 3 to November 12.

JOHN HASSE - at The Ordinary, Nashville, Indiana, Fri. and Sat. nights.

TOM JONES - at the Underground Orleans, 304 Main St., Cincinnati, Ohio Mon. /Tues. 8 - 12 p. m. and 8:30 p. m. - 1:30 a. m. on Fri. /Sat.

JIM KAPLAN - at the Pizza-Stein, 1428 W. Galena Ave., Freeport, Illinois on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

JOHN MADDOX - at Northern Hotel, Billings, Montana October 31 to December 3.

GLENN MEYER - and his band at St. Louis, Mo., making regular appearances.

BOB MILNE - at Charley's Crab Rest., Troy, Mich. I75 at Crook's Rd. Exit. (Alternates with Bob Seeley) 4:00 p. m. to 12:00 p. m. Mon. to Fri., 8 to 12 Sat., 5 to 9 Sun.

MIKE MONTGOMERY - at The Dakota Inn, Rathskeller, John R. Road north of McNichols, Detroit, Michigan, Friday nights.

MAX MORATH - on the road with his show "The Ragtime Years".

DR. ELI NEWBERGER - and The New Black Eagle Jazz Band at the Stickey Wicket Pub, West Main Street, Hopkinton, Mass., Thursday 8:00 p. m. to 12:00 p. m. (Pianist is Bob Pilsbury).

TOM NOEL - on the road with his living portrayal shows "Mark Twain at Home", and "Mr. Jelly Lord" based on the life of Jelly Roll Morton.

RASPILLAIRE AND GISH - a musical husband/wife duo performing ragtime at Shakey's, Orlando, Florida

SI. RICHARDS - at Sheldon Inn, 6611 Eastland Rd., Middleburgh Heights, Ohio (5 min. south of Cleveland Hopkins Airport). Tues. thru Sat. 6:00 p. m. to 10:00 p. m.

HANK ROSS - with Red Onion Jazz Band, at O'Connor's Beef'n Ale House, 708 Mountain Blvd., Watchung, N. J. Fri. nights at 7:30 p. m. on.

TOM SCHMUTZLER - with banjoist Harry Malfas, the Hardware City Temperance & Ragtime Society at "The Ground Round", Plainville, Ct. Sun. nights. Also touring schools in southern New England with his own presentation "Our Ragtime Heritage".

BOB SEELEY - at Charley's Crab Rest., Troy, Mich. I75 at Crook's Rd. Exit. (Alternates with Bob Milne) 4:00 p. m. to 12:00 p. m. Mon. to Fri. 8 to 12 Sat., 5 to 9 Sun.

RICHARD SKRIKA - at the piano with the Eric Mannering New Imperial Jazz Band - Lee's Imperial Tavern, Riverside Drive, Windsor, Ontario, every Sat. 4:00 to 7:00 p. m.

DAN SUMMERS - and New Charleston Chasers regularly appearing in the Buffalo area.

TREBOR TICHENOR - (The Professor) in Observatory, Rodeway Inn, Jefferson & Market Streets, St. Louis, Mo. 5:00 p. m. to 7:00 Mon. thru Fri. Also has playing dates on Goldenrod Showboat.

JERRY TRAUNIG - playing at the "One Way Fare", Simsbury, Conn. Sun. nights.

TERRY WALDO - has weekly half hour radio show "THIS IS RAGTIME" on National Public Radio - Check your local listing.

GALEN WILKES - does weekly half hour radio show "THE RAGTIME YEARS" Fri. 6:00 p. m. 88.7 FM from Hofstra Univ., Hempstead, Long Island, NY

TEX WYNDHAM - and The Red Lion Jazz Band in the Green Room at the Hotel duPont, 11th & Market Sts., Wilmington, Del. 1st Fri. each month, 8.30 p. m. to 12.30 a. m. A/C 302-656-8121.

CHARLIE RASCH - with SISTER KATE (ROSS), at the Cow Palace, Bancroft Rd. about 8 miles west of Toledo, Ohio, Saturdays 9:00 p. m. on.

MATERIAL AVAILABLE FROM THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

(Continued from Page 2)

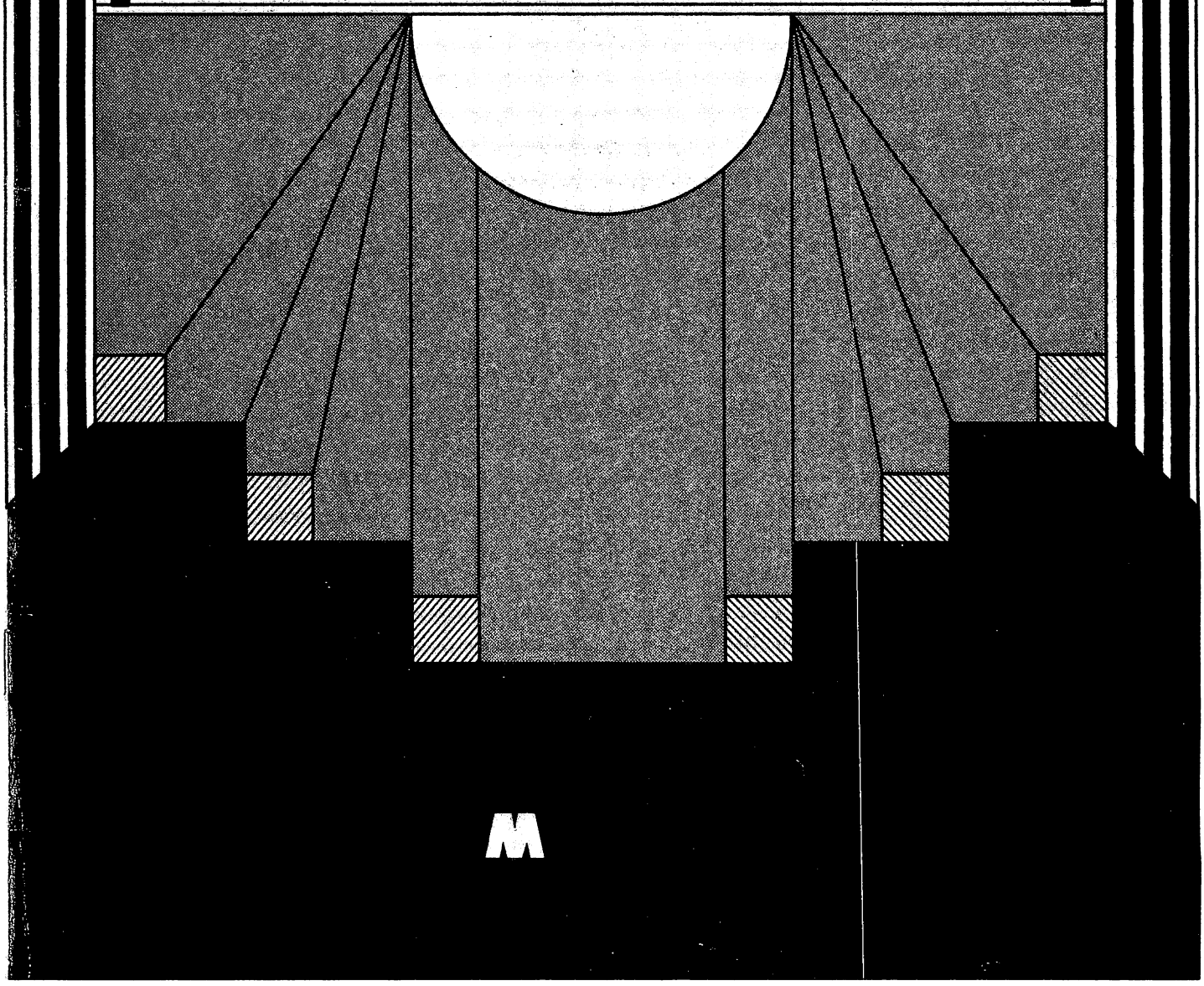
TITLE	ORDERING NUMBER
Colonial Glide (P. Pratt)	SR-064
Coney Island Dip, The-March-Two-Step (A. J. Resseque)	SR-168
Cotton Patch, A (Chas. A. Tyler)	SR-181
Cotton Pickers Rag (Harry O. Sutton)	SR-100
Crash! "Some Rag" (Van & Schenck)	SR-147
Darkey Tickle, The (E. B. Hunt)	SR-093
Dixie Dimples (Scott)	SR-050
Dixie Flyer Cakewalk-Two Step (A. E. Henrich)	SR-164
Dusty Rag (Aufderheide)	SR-027
Easy Winners, The (Joplin)	SR-013
Elite Syncopations (Joplin)	SR-014
Encore Rag (Tad Fischer)	SR-175
Entertainer's Rag, The (Jay Roberts)	SR-091
Entertainer, The (Joplin)	SR-015
Father Knickerbocker Rag (Edwin E. Wilson)	SR-144
Florida Rag (Lowry)	SR-023
For Aunt Clorinda's Cake (Jos. D. & Kelso Murdock)	SR-094
Fred Heltman's Rag (Fred Heltman)	SR-114
French Pastry Rag (Lee Copeland)	SR-146
Frog Legs Rag (Scott)	SR-019
Fun-Bob (Wenrich)	SR-069
Georgia Rag, The (A. Gumble)	SR-074
Golden Spider Rag (Chas. L. Johnson)	SR-148
Halley's Comet (H. J. L. Lincoln)	SR-067
Harlem Rag (Turpin) (Cover Reproduced)	SR-011
Heliotrope Bouguet (Joplin-Chauvin)	SR-018
Hifalutin Rag (Lodge)	SR-068
Honeymoon Rag (Scott)	SR-020
Honeysuckle Rag (George Botsford)	SR-136
Horseshoe Rag (Julia Lee Niebergall)	SR-118
Humpty Dumpty (C. Straight)	SR-084
Jamaica Jinjer Rag (Egbert VanAlstyne)	SR-157
Just Laughin' (A. E. Henrich)	SR-097
Kansas City Rag (Scott) (Cover Reproduced)	SR-006
King Chanticleer (Ayer)	SR-047
Kissing Bug Rag (C. L. Johnson)	SR-077
Knick Knocks Rag (Phil Schwartz)	SR-149
Kyrene (E. J. Stark)	SR-079
Lazy Luke (Geo. J. Philpot)	SR-122
Lemon Drops - A Rag (Bernard)	SR-025
Leola Two-Step (Joplin)	SR-026
Les Copeland's 38th Street Rag (Les Copeland)	SR-151
Let's Dance Rag (Wally Herzer)	SR-158
Lily Rag, The (Charles Thompson)	SR-108
Lion Tamer Rag, The (M. Janza)	SR-083
Live Wires Rag (Shepherd) (Cover Reproduced)	SR-009

Max Morath's

SONGS OF THE EARLY 20th CENTURY ENTERTAINER

Featuring Songs Written and Performed by

BERT WILLIAMS

BOB COLE · J. ROSAMOND JOHNSON · LUCKEY ROBERTS

JAMES WELDON JOHNSON · JAMES REESE EUROPE and others